

JUL 23 2007

Glenda Wiles

Ravalli County Commissioner

From: jloring [jloring@cybernet1.com]

Sent: Saturday, July 21, 2007 12:39 PM

To: Glenda Wiles; James Rokosch; Kathleen Driscoll; Carlotta Grandstaff

Subject: disappointed in your votes, actions; wondering what, exactly, you took as being the "message" from voters --?

July 21, 2007

Dear Commissioners James Rokosch, Carlotta Grandstaff and Kathleen Driscoll:

I read the Ravalli Republic article regarding your approval of Moiese Meadows subdivision. Perhaps I read the article incorrectly but it appears Rokosch did not vote and both Grandstaff and Driscoll approved the plans.

When you Dems/independent were elected to the Commission, I took it as a very strong signal that the voters in our county do NOT want subdivisions; do NOT want subdivisions that evade, avoid (use your similar word here as well), our 2-for-1 voter approved limits; or which evade review by misusing family transfers; or that will create subdivisions that do not pay each subdivision's share of impact on our environment.

Yet by passing this Moiese Meadows, you all have done just that: you have let me down, other voters, and appear to be headed along the same path as those you replaced.

For instance, there seem to be very serious procedural and/or legal issues. It appears that "new information" was brought up at the hearing you had and yet none of you apparently felt that "new information" was important enough to send the entire proposal back to the Planning Department. Shame on you, especially since the article also indicated that this "new information" was much relied upon in your final decision. With Aspen Springs, the Commission made them return to Planning & Zoning-- why not this one?

And do you really, credibly, believe that a mere \$1,500 to Stevi Schools is sufficient? If so, you all must be replaced next election. Impact on our schools continue, year after year after year. It is not just a one time thing that can get by on a one time infusion of so little an amount. The same comments apply to the measly \$500 you agreed to for the Sheriff's Department (which is always hungry for more money).

The only potential silver lining to this otherwise ominous black cloud you are starting to create and foster is that apparently you are going to require some sort of communal sewage treatment.

And the wells? Did you even consider, with serious thought of future consequences, the very real impact on our aquifer? Or the long term damage caused by pollution? I don't care how long your "lengthy discussion" may have been; the impact of 33 new wells has and will have an impact, adverse at that. We are already seeing wells dry up, folks having to drill deeper to find water, effects of global warming.

This is particularly true if you are going to continue to approve subdivisions right and left under some sort of "settlement" which apparently was done because you fear litigation. You will have litigation regardless. Your decisions on subdivisions must be based on science and fact, not fear of lawsuits. You were not all elected to be afraid to stand up for what is right. You were not elected because you have no backbone to do the right thing so that a lawsuit against you would fail. You were elected to protect Ravalli County, its environment, our water table, prevent unnecessary pollution, to impose reasonable and larger impact fees, whether they be on-going or substantially more up front from a developer.

If you keep approving subdivisions as you seem set on doing this early on after the election, our County will look like hell from California just as soon as it would have had we retained the Commissioners we had. The voters -- especially this one-- did not want that as our future. I wanted more level headed folks at the helm, folks who would not be afraid of being sued, who would insist developers cross the "t" and dot the "i" and if not done perfectly the first time, to make them do it again, and again, as many times as necessary in order to protect Ravalli County and to insist that proper impact fees be paid, upfront and/or on an on-going basis. How is the

7/23/2007

Sheriff or the Road Department or the Schools going to be able to afford the quality education guaranteed under our Montana Constitution with \$1,500? How is the Sheriff's Department going to ensure public safety, let alone respond in a timely manner, on \$500? How is the Road Department supposed to do its job on \$500? These are such measly amounts you might as well have simply waived them all.

To learn you spoke with the developer before the hearing was quite distressing. At least you had the courage to mention it before the hearing although, from the Republic article, I have no idea if anyone took notes or told any member of the public exactly who said what to whom. However to have those sorts of discussions, not open to the public, clearly never noticed to the public before the fact that your discussions with a developer were going to occur, is shameful ex parte communication. You cannot convince me that those in private discussions had no bearing on what seems to be your willingness to either not take a position or to approve, yet again like the last Commission, whatever developers want.

I am very concerned that "new information" and developer promises made orally during your hearing influenced greatly your decisions on whether to vote at all and/or to then vote for the project. If true, the entire plan should have been sent back to Planning.

Please come up with serious impact fees. The on-going impacts of subdivisions, home ownership therein, the selling and buying and continued transfer of homes within new subdivisions, growing families, the list goes on and on, cannot possibly be mitigated by a one time infusion of less than \$2,000. I recall reading how the city of Hamilton has commissioned studies to calculate reasonable impact fees. Why can't our Commission follow that lead? Without information as to what it costs to provide services, you cannot make a reasoned, informed decision. Yet, to me, impact fees are a very large part of the entire subdivision puzzle that simply has to be addressed before you continue to approve these developments.

So, newly elected Commissioners of mine, please take your jobs more seriously. You were elected because the voters were sick and tired of Commissioners with ties to the real estate industry in our county; we wanted real change, , not just pre-election promises all too soon forgotten. Your duty, if you are prepared yet to accept it, is to protect our county, our watershed, our environment. It is not to do back room deals, it is not to take "new promises" and call it good enough to approve something that is not included in the original proposal submitted to the Planning Department. What will you do when those oral assurances are not performed? Then where will you be? Seems to me that promises made at a public hearing are worth about the cost of the paper they are printed on, i.e. zip, zilch, nada, nothing.

Sincerely,

Judith Loring (who voted for all of you and who really does not want to regret my vote)
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